



## **HB1139 – Solid Waste Disposal and Diversion and On-Farm Composting and Compost Use**

**Testimony before House Environment & Transportation Committee  
March 8, 2023**

**Position: Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in support of HB1139, Solid Waste Disposal and Diversion and On-Farm Composting and Compost Use. We appreciate the leadership of Delegate Boyce for sponsoring this important legislation.

This bill creates needed grant programs for waste reduction (including reuse, recycling, and composting) and on-farm composting and compost use. A nominal surcharge on waste disposal at landfills and incinerators will fund grants. This funding will mobilize an estimated \$12 million to build alternatives to waste disposal by supporting infrastructure, program development, education, and creation of jobs.

Maryland landfills are emitting four times more methane than was previously estimated. There is an *immediate* need to divert food waste from landfills. Howard County is shipping waste out of County because our landfill is filled. We're in desperate need of solutions other than landfills. This program will disincentivize solid waste disposal in landfills and incinerators and will create alternatives.

Expansion of composting infrastructure and availability of high-quality compost is crucial for agriculture in Maryland. Compost builds healthier soils, reduces the need for synthetic nitrogen fertilizers, and increases organic matter in soil. The main obstacle to composting infrastructure and compost programs is a lack of funding. This bill overcomes that obstacle.

Maryland needs to create waste diversion programs more aggressively. This bill will make waste diversion more accessible and competitive, and will support innovation and economic competition. Grants will be accessible to local government, local educational institutions, non-profit organizations, farmers, and for-profit businesses. Haulers wanting to move into waste reduction activities will be eligible for grants. And Marylanders need to be better educated on waste issues to understand the full scope of the problem and what they can do as citizens. Similar programs have benefited several other states, most notably Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina.

For all of these reasons, we urge you to pass the Solid Waste Disposal and Diversion and On-Farm Composting and Compost Use bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.**

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